

state that its country is unknown, but that from analogy it is probably Western Asia. "Rye is supposed to come from the Levant," says M. Eude Deslongchamps, in the 'Dictionnaire des Sciences Naturelles,' vol. xlvi. p. 310. According to M. Kunth\* it is a native of the countries near the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea, but he does not cite any proof. All this is as vague as the assertion of other ancient and modern authors relative to the Isle of Crete. The rye which Marshall of Biberstein found on the Caucasus, and which he supposed to be common rye, is now found to be the *Secale fragile*, a different species. M. C. Koch†, a traveller who has traversed Anatolia, Armenia, the Caucasus and Crimea, now affirms that he has found rye under circumstances where it appears to be really spontaneous and native. I quote verbally: "On the mountains of Pont, not far from the village of Dshmil, in the country of Hemschin, upon granite, at an elevation of 5000 or 6000 feet, I found our common rye alongside my road (*an Rändern*). It was thin in the ear, and about 1 to 2½ inches long. No one remembered that it had ever been cultivated in the neighbourhood; it was not even known as a cereal. I have received the same ears, thin and short, from M. Thirke, at Brussa. If I am not mistaken, he had gathered them on Mount Olympus or in the neighbourhood. I but seldom found that rye was cultivated, for example in the countries of Kur, of Artaban, &c."

The question appears to be decided by the details given by M. Koch, and in the way that history and botanical geography rendered most likely.—A. DeCandolle in the *Bibliothèque Universelle de Genève*, June 1849.

PRESIDENCY OF THE LINNÆAN SOCIETY.

The 'Athenæum,' in noticing Mr. Robert Brown's acceptance of the unanimous invitation of the Council of the Linnæan Society to allow himself to be nominated for the presidency, favours the Society with the following sapient suggestion:—"It has not transpired whether the invitation has or has not been received conditionally by Mr. Brown. There is a strong feeling among the Fellows in favour of a biennial election to the presidency." We need hardly say that this statement is wholly without foundation, and merely the impudent assertion of the anonymous writer who has obtruded it upon the public.—R. T.

*On the pulverulent matter which covers the surface of the body of Lixus and other Insects.*

Several insects exhibit, on their surface, various pulverulent substances, very analogous to cryptogamic vegetations, but merely in abnormal cases, which terminate in the death of the animal. The species of *Lixus*, and some exotic Coleoptera, exhibit, in their healthy state, a quantity of a yellow powder on their elytra, which is reproduced when artificially removed.

From the observations of MM. Boulbène and Follin it appears that this powder presents sporules, filaments, and, in a word, all the

\* Enumeratio Plant. vol. i. p. 449. † Linnæa, vol. xxi. p. 427, 1848.